



These Old Tales

Kenneth W. Cain

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Draw up your covers, turn on your lights and get ready to explore some generally weird, creepy little tales where the truth lies somewhere beyond what you expect.

These Old Tales is a collection of dark fiction, containing 38 flash to short story length pieces. There are over 75,000 words of delectable hair-raising terror in these pages, stories that will make you think, tales that will keep you awake at night wondering what that noise you keep hearing in the attic really is. Each story is designed to be a quick hit of disturbing matter that you can read on the go or in the comfort of your own home. Whether you are seeking gunfights, ghosts, abnormalities, werewolves, zombies, psychotic killers, the reaper, the devil, or all around everyday bad guys this collection has something for you.

These Old Tales Details

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Author : Kenneth W. Cain

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From Reader Review These Old Tales for online ebook

K. Jones says

There's a reason why I enjoy reading collections by single authors. They kind of provide a buffet of what an author is all about. These Old Tales is packed with stories of all lengths and poetry that really engages the reader. I tend to read collections or anthologies at a slower pace because I usually only read one or two stories at a time. Kind of like cleansing the pallet. With all collections, a reader will hand pick out certain stories they liked or disliked and These Old Tales will certainly offer those choices, but overall this is a great collection. Plus it has one of the best covers that I have seen in a long time.

John says

Decent book. Well written and the stories kept me intrigued. Thank you

Dane Hatchell says

I'm convinced when Kenneth Cain pushed his way out the womb he told a story after taking his first breath. The tale may have been short, but I have no doubt compelling.

These Old Tales offers a bountiful collection of flash fiction, short stories, and yes, even poetry. A variety of creatures crawl from the pages such as ghosts, zombies, werewolves, Satan, Death, deranged killers, and many other nasty sorts.

I admire how Cain trusts the intelligence of the reader in his story presentations. Subtle complexities build toward a satisfying conclusion. Professional writing and tight editing make the collection a pleasurable read. Lucky Shrimp, Nocturnal, Satisfied, and Blood Soliloquy are a few favorites that jump to mind. Not to be missed.

Adeline says

Very awesome short stories! I love how you're dragged in and you don't know your in danger until its too late to turn back! ;) No really Kenneth Cain is a very talented writer and this book is a must read! So go buy it already!

Squire says

Scenes from the zombie apocalypse, fisticuffs at the Pearly Gates, demented killers, wanna-be killers, bizarre

horticulture, harbinger cerulean bunnies and a frantic mouse in search of cheese (my personal favorite) are just some of the creepy delights to found in this entertaining collection for short stories/flash fictions.

The author deftly inhabits the minds of his protagonists, turning each piece into a sharp characterization that resonates long after it's (usually) morbid conclusion. Not all are winners, some show signs of too much or too little tinkering, but the range from the horrific to the humorous is handled with a distinctive style and wit that will have you craving the next volume of tales from Kenneth Cain.

C. Bryan Brown says

If a novel is an author's magnum opus then a short story is his or her calling card. It is dug up, brushed off, and prepared with care and concern, then left where the reader can stumble upon it. What you have with Cain's "These Old Tales" is a collection of calling cards that he's prepared and there's something for everyone.

The majority of the writing contained in this collection is horror; it's dark, foreboding, and creepy. But don't despair, because it works here as Cain tempers the darkness with the one thing every reader needs to make the horrific truly disturbing: hope. Now, that's not to say every tale is brimming with it. "These Old Tales" has its share pulls your guts out stories, so if that's your thing, you'll be satisfied. But it's those glimmers of hope Cain delivers at just the right moment that really drives the spike into the brain. Few authors today are able to make that balance. They either stumble around in the darkness, not understanding how it works, and resort to trying to gross out the reader or they just keep feeling around, confused, and that translates into mumbo-jumbo for the reader.

A few of my favorites were Molt, for its simplistic take on an oft-boring sub-genre. The story Presence felt very Poe-ish to me... very Tell-tale Heart. Very much enjoyed that one. And Moving On... a poignant tale about death, but not in the way you'd think.

All in all, I recommend Cain's collection for any fan of the horror short story. You won't be disappointed.

Issa says

Some good stories, but there were a bunch of "eh" stories too.

Bill says

I have previously read other of Mr. Cain's short works, and I have to say that I was not as captivated by this collection as I'd hoped I would be. Having said that, perhaps it's fair to say that this could be a case of the "elevated expectations" syndrome I seem to encounter with some books, and especially films, that I have very much looked forward to. Some of the stories in this collection were excellent, and many, such as the first piece, which maybe even raised my expectations a bit, are very clever in the way they end with a sucker punch that I at least did not see coming. Others in the collection seemed fairly predictable, even cliche, to

me, which made the collection seem uneven overall in quality. I don't see anyone credited as editor for this collection, and that could be part of the story.

As I said, I have greatly enjoyed several other short works by this author, and look forward to his subsequent collection of short fiction, *Fresh Cut Tales*, as well as his *Saga of I* trilogy.

Donna says

Even though this collection, as a whole, is not as gripping as one might hope, there are a few real gems that make it worth the read. In my view, Kenneth W. Cain's best work is displayed in the short stories. As with most of the collection, there are many familiar horror themes, but Cain manages to give most an interesting twist. "Nocturnal" is one such story, but any discussion may prove a spoiler, so I'll move on. Among the zombie stories, "After the Ocolitz" and "Gladiator David" both treat familiar territory in rather new ways, which is quite a feat given the abundance of zombie themes in popular culture today; either story could be developed into a book or screenplay, but both stand on their own as stories. Other stories of note include "Determination," in which a city uses a machine to "discover the future of ... eighteen year olds," and "Empty Spaces," with which Cain, as he says, "visit[s] the mind of a man that has been entranced, hidden away, and secured--only to be unlocked once more."

My favorite story in the collection may be "What's This Line For?," which explores our (American?) willingness to jump in line for anything that looks popular and our impatience with waiting our turn. In many ways, this story transcends the genre of dark fiction, and it illustrates well Cain's insight into humanity. (For we all do seem to be "waiting," don't we? and very often we probably don't know what we're waiting for....)

With all these good stories, it must be clear by now that the weakness of the collection lies in the other sections. In my opinion, Cain should have resisted the urge to include in this collection his "Flash Fiction" and "Poetry," however much he wanted to see it in print. I won't say that it's all terrible; it isn't. However, as they say, it is what it is. As Cain admits, most of the flash fiction pieces were written as exercises or for contests; while some of them are intriguing, they are not developed enough to warrant inclusion in a collection. They'd make good blog entries, and some should eventually find their ways into longer pieces of fiction, but they simply should not have been included here, especially not in the front of the book--some readers may have put the book down before they got to the really good stuff.

At least someone had the good sense to place the poetry in the back of the book, though, again, it shouldn't have been included. I'm far from a poetry expert, but I did find myself liking many of the poems, though none are particular memorable. The ones with a political slant could easily go viral on social media, as perhaps could some of the others. Maybe some could even work their ways into longer fiction or be published through the usual outlets for poetry. But their inclusion here just doesn't make sense because it diminished the value of the collection.

The point here is that sometimes less really is more. Had this been a collection of just the short stories, it would have been much more successful. One could complain that the collection would have benefited from better editing (to lessen the annoyance of typos and grammatical errors, and perhaps to push Cain to provide more details in some spots), but Cain's imagination and insights offer much to the reader. There is no doubt that this Pennsylvania writer has a lively imagination, and I look forward to reading his future work.

Marcus says

I voluntarily reviewed an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review

This is a collection of short stories that have a serious bent toward the dark side of a person's reality. There are stories about getting in a fight in a line trying to figure out where you will spend eternity, a western involving a werewolf, lizards eating a man bent on committing infidelity, stories that the reader has to actually think about and some that just make the reader say oops. Good book

Rob Allens says

Short story collections usually don't do much for me, but this is an exception to that rule. Cain gives us well-crafted tales with a very unique perspective. His stories avoid the cliche of violence, gore and blood to give us horror from a very different angle. A man crushed under a massive metal bar. But is that really what happened? Cain's tales are never what they seem and it keeps you reading. I could have done without the poetry, but I'm not a fan of that side of literature. A good one here!

Katya says

I was stunned by the sick scenes this author can imagine!! Some of the stories are beyond morbid and all of them come with a can-you-figure-it-out-in-time twist.

Minus one star because there's still a need for some editing- typos, wife called by the wrong name, etc.

Celeste says

I am not going to say this is a bad book...some of the stories were pretty good, but overall...ehhhh

Kyle Dickerson says

Not only does Kenneth Cain shoot you into a world of tension, filled with the darkness of the twisted human psyche, but he does it with finesse. These Old Tales gives a glimpse into the fears we all share and the nightmares we try to avoid. Get comfortable, grab a cup of coffee, and get ready to be thrust into the twisted mind of Kenneth Cain. And whatever you do...leave a light on.
